the only other country in the world that has a similar variety of climate and topography. This endless diversity of patterns is, to us, the key to understanding the American scene. In whatever direction you look, you know that things are different beyond the horizon. This is what keeps the frontier of the country open.

The national parks were among our major discoveries. There are few spots in the world equal in harmonious beauty to Mount Rainier, Crater Lake, Zion National Park, or the Grand Teton. We visited the Grand Canyon several times, and each time, each hour of the day, it looked different. It was fascinating to look from the rim into the depths of the earth and discover its weird beauty. Nor is the charm of the national parks limited to their natural beauty. We were impressed by the preservation of wild life—the tame bears in Yellowstone Park, the elk and buffalo herds—and we liked the campfire talks of the Parks' rangers about their trees, flowers, wild animals, and rock formations.

We have also been impressed by the thoughtfulness, skill, and good taste that has been used in developing these lovely spots. No big hotels, no coffee shops at outlook points. Modest accommodations inconspicuous from a distance, beautiful access roads, inviting trails running into wilderness. The national parks have become a portion of our picture of the United States, not only as a part of its natural scenery but as an evidence of the people's love and understanding of nature. It remains a puzzle to us why so little attention is given to this aspect of the United States in the popular descriptions of this country. Indeed, the guidebooks give more space to the Empire State Building or Rockefeller Center in New York, to the luxurious hotels in Miami and famous eating places in New Orleans, than to the Grand Canyon and other national parks.

THE PEOPLE

One of the things we had heard about the United States before we came here was its conformity, the lack of individuality of its people. This myth is widespread throughout the world and can be found, in a new form, in modern books on mass psychology in this country. We have not found more standardization in the United States than in other countries. Standardization here is limited to the techniques of living. People wear the same kinds of clothes, enjoy the same movies, use the same clichés in speech. They have undergone the impact of the same public schools. They have the same drugstores and cafeterias from coast to coast. Yet they are deeply individualistic. Perhaps there is a strong pressure toward conformity in small communities, which we

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